

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, this morning I toured an exhibit at Florida International University's Jewish Museum of Florida, located in Miami Beach, which details the discovery and recovery of artifacts depicting Jewish life in Iraq over the centuries.

I was privileged to be joined by members of the Iraqi Jewish community, including Hillel Shohet and his brother, Maurice Shohet, who played key roles in ensuring that these artifacts remain with the Jewish community.

I was also proud to lead the effort here in Congress to keep the artifacts in the U.S. I led that effort along with my colleague, the gentleman from New York, STEVE ISRAEL, and other congressional colleagues.

These treasures, Mr. Speaker, were confiscated from the Jewish community by Saddam Hussein's intelligence service and were discarded until they were discovered in a flooded basement by our American servicemembers in the year 2003. They were then brought back to our National Archives where they were painstakingly recovered and preserved.

Mr. Speaker, this exhibit is an important piece of the Jewish community's collective memory and must continue to be preserved and shared for generations to come.

CONGRATULATING WALNUT HILLS HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BAND

(Mr. CHABOT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, this evening I rise to recognize the Walnut Hills High School Marching Band. They traveled to Paris last week to participate in La Grande Parade, which runs along the Champs-Élysées.

La Grande Parade is the showcase event in Paris on New Year's Day and attracts hundreds of thousands of spectators from all over the world. So it was a great opportunity to show the world just how talented our students in Cincinnati are. Only four bands from the United States—two high schools and two colleges—were selected to participate in this prestigious event.

It is fitting that Walnut Hills was one of those four bands, as the Marching Blue and Gold have been rated superior for 13 straight years by the Ohio Music Education Association.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the students, parents, teachers, and supporters of Walnut Hills High School, one of the best high schools in Cincinnati, on this well-deserved honor. I know the students in the band put in a lot of hard work for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. They have truly made our community proud.

Go Eagles.

E-FREE ACT

(Mr. FITZPATRICK asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to tell the story of Amanda Dykeman of Illinois, one of the tens of thousands of women permanently harmed by the sterilization device known as Essure.

After Amanda had the device implanted in 2010 at the age of 28, her hair began to fall out, she felt great fatigue, continuously fought urinary tract and kidney infections, and would suffer from severe abdominal and joint pain. She suffered with so much pain that she would contemplate suicide. Her symptoms subsided after a total hysterectomy in 2013, but, physically, she knows that the device left her permanently damaged.

I rise as a voice for the Essure Sisters, who number in the thousands, to tell this Chamber that their stories are real, their pain is real, and their fight is real.

Mr. Speaker, my bill, the E-Free Act, can halt this tragedy by removing this dangerous device from the market. I urge my colleagues to join in this fight because stories like Amanda's are too important to ignore.

HARNEY COUNTY, OREGON

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ABRAHAM). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I am sure my colleagues are aware of the situation in Harney County, Oregon, where a group of armed protesters have overtaken a Federal facility in the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.

This group is led largely by people who are not necessarily from Oregon, although they obviously have supporters from Oregon. They were originally there to protest the sentencing of Dwight and Steve Hammond.

I know the Hammonds. I have known them for probably close to 20 years. They are longtime, responsible ranchers in Harney County. They have been sentenced to prison not once, but now twice. I will get into that in a moment.

The point I want to make at the outset is for people in this Chamber to understand what drives people to do what is happening tonight in Harney County.

I have had the great honor and privilege to represent Harney County for a number of years. I have seen the impact of Federal policies from the Clinton administration to the Obama administration. I have seen what happens when overzealous bureaucrats and agencies go beyond the law and clamp down on people. I have seen what courts have done. I have seen the time for Congress to act and then it has not.

I want to put this area in perspective because I think it is really important to understand how big this region is. By size, my congressional district in

Oregon is something like the seventh or eighth biggest in the Congress. If you overlaid it over the east coast, it would start in the Atlantic and end in Ohio.

The county where this occupation is taking place—Harney County—is over 10,000 square miles. There are 7,000 souls inhabiting it. If my math is right, that is one person for every 1.4 miles. One person for every 1.4 miles.

Just this one county is 10 times the size of Rhode Island. It is larger than the State of Maryland. And 72 percent of it is under the command and control of the Federal Government.

It is the public's land. That is true. But what people don't understand is the culture, the lifestyle, of the great American West and how much these ranchers care about the environment, about the future, about their children, about America, and how much they believe in the Constitution. Now we see the extent they will go to in order to defend what they view as their constitutional rights.

Now, I am not defending armed takeovers. I do not think that is appropriate. I think the time has come for those to consider that they have made their case in the public about what is happening in the West, and perhaps it is time for them to realize they have made their case and to go home.

But I want to talk about what happened with the Hammonds. I want to put in perspective what happens almost every year in my district. That is these enormous wildfires.

□ 1930

The Miller Homestead Wildfire in 2012 burned 160,000 acres, mostly in this county, if not all; 250 square miles, a quarter of the size of the State of Rhode Island. That was just in 2012.

The Barry Point Fire that year, in Lake County, next door, burned 93,000 acres. Last summer alone, we burned 799,974 acres across Oregon; that is both forest and high desert. In 2012, 3.4 million acres burned in Oregon.

There was another fire in Malheur County. The Long Draw Fire, in 2012, burned 557,000 acres, five times the size of Rhode Island. So 93,000 acres, 557,000 acres, 160,000 acres, all burning.

The Hammonds are in prison tonight for setting a backfire that they admit to, that burned 139 acres, and they will sit in prison, time served and time going forward, 5 years, under a law that I would argue was never intended to mete out that kind of punishment, and I will get to that in a moment.

I have told you I worked with the Hammonds and many ranchers in Harney County. In the last years of the Clinton administration, despite their own agency's reviews and analysis, Bill Clinton threatened to create a giant monument on Steens Mountain.

When Secretary Babbitt, the Interior Secretary at the time, came before the House Resources Committee, of which I was a member, I said: Mr. Secretary, your own resource advisory committees in the area just reported that